

REMARKS

Please reconsider the present application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for carefully considering the present application.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 1-8, 10, and 11 were pending in the present application. Claim 11 has been canceled. Thus, claims 1-8 and 10 are now pending in the present application. Claims 1, 4, and 5 are independent claims. Claims 2 and 3 are dependent from claim 1, and claims 6-8 and 10 are dependent, either directly or indirectly, from claim 5.

Claim Amendments

Claims 1, 4, and 5 have been amended by way of this reply. Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of allowable claim 11. Claims 4 and 5 have amended into independent form. No new matter has been added by way of these amendments, and the amendments do not require a new search. Accordingly, entry and favorable consideration thereof is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 4-8, 10, and 11 contain allowable subject matter. Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of allowable claim 11. Claims 2 and 3 are dependent from claim 1. Claims 4 and 5 have been rewritten into

independent form. Claims 6-8 and are dependent, either directly or indirectly, from claim 5. Thus, claims 1-8, and 10 now stand allowable.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102

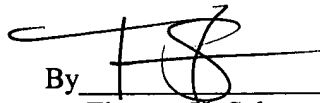
Claims 1-3 of the present application were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,014,012 ("Kuboyama"). Claim 1 has been amended by way of this reply to incorporate all of the limitations of allowable claim 11. Thus, claim 1 is patentable over Kuboyama, for at least the reasons claim 11 was indicated as allowable. Claims 2-3 depend from claim 1. Thus, claims 2-3 are patentable over Kuboyama, at least for the same reasons as claim 1. Thus, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply is fully responsive to all outstanding issues and places the present application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account No. 50-0591, under Order No. 02008/149001 from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

Dated: June 23, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By 

Thomas K. Scherer
Registration No.: 45,079
OSHA · LIANG LLP
1221 McKinney St., Suite 2800
Houston, Texas 77010
(713) 228-8600
(713) 228-8778 (Fax)

158383_1